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ECUMENISM

EMMANUEL NIDIRY:
A CHAMPION OF ECUMENISM
Dr. George Kanjirakkatt

OIKOUMENE AS UNITY AND THE QUEST
FOR UNITY: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT
AND IMPLICATIONS
Dr. Sabu John Panachickal

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Editorial

This issue of Christian Orient reaches the readers in the context of so many conferences and discussions everywhere in the world on the impact of the Second Vatican Council after fifty years in the life of the Church. During this half century period more than ever the Catholic Church has been heavily involved in ecumenical activity. To a remarkable extent, this activity has been stimulated and directed by the Popes Paul VI, John Paul II and Benedict XVI. Following in the footsteps of John XXIII, these Popes have given high priority to ecumenism, and have repeatedly met with the ecumenical patriarchs of Constantinople, the archbishops of Canterbury, and other Christian leaders. Special mention also is to be made about the Secretariat for Promoting the Unity of Christians which gives steady, prudent, tactful, and progressive leadership in the field of ecumenism. Among the more fruitful ecumenical efforts, a place of special prominence belongs to the ecumenical dialogues. The Holy See itself has sponsored important international dialogues with the Orthodox, the Anglicans, the Lutherans, and others. It is praiseworthy that to an increasing degree, ecumenism has penetrated the teaching of theology and seminary formation.

The contributors of this issue are Reverend Fathers George Kanjirakkatt and

Sabu John Panachickal. Rev. Dr George Kanjirakkatt, a priest of the Archeparchy of Thalassery, is presently the director of Catechesis of this Archeparchy. He obtained his doctorate in oriental church history from the Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome in the year 2008 by defending the doctoral thesis on the subject, "Emmanuel Nidiry: The Promoter of Autonomy Unity of the Church of St Thomas Christians".

By briefly describing the sad history of the division in the Apostolic Church of St Thomas Christians in India, Dr Kanjirakkatt explains how Emmanuel Nidiry, the undisputed leader of this Syrian Church, became the inspiring force in the struggle for liberation and unification of the divided Church. This well documented article unveils the untiring and sincere ecumenical leadership that this great priest of Syrian Church gave and the organizational initiatives which he took with the participation of the local people. The author states that Pope John XXIII, who initiated a new path for the Christian ecumenism was only a one year old child when Nidiry spelt out an ecclesiology of communion and unity through Syrian National Union Association of Malabar or *Jâthaikya Sangham*. According to the author Emmanuel Nidiry is the Moses who delivered the ancient Apostolic See of Malabar from the hands of the foreign prelates.

Rev. Dr Sabu John Panachickal, a priest of the Eparchy of Kanjirapally, is currently the director of Pastoral Animation Centre, Anakkara. He did his doctoral studies in the Catholic University of Leuven on the subject of "Eastern Concept of Oikonomia: Implications for ecumenical theology, sacramentology and ecology. He is also now a visiting professor in St Joseph's Pontifical Seminary, Aluva, the same institution where he has done his philosophical and theological studies.

In his article entitled "Oikoumene as Unity and the Quest for Unity: Historical Development and Implications", Dr Panachickal explores and analyses very clearly the historical context of the use and understanding of the term Oikoumene from which the word ecumenism originates. He then proceeds further with a brief explanation of the various Ecumenical Councils that took place in the history which defined dogmas, condemned heresies and attempted to unify the divided Church. Finally there is a special mention on the last ecumenical council, that of Second Vatican with special mention on its decree on ecumenism. He keenly observes the different models adopted and held especially by the Catholic, Orthodox and Reformation Churches. He also refers to the earlier theological issues which still prevent the progress of dialogue in ecumenical relations. In this context there is special mention about

the comparatively opposite teachings and positions of Cyprian and Augustine which have great influence on the ecclesiology and sacramental theology of East and West. According to him, there should be renewed endeavours in modern theological sphere for understanding God more functionally (*oikonomia*) than ontologically (*theologia*). He concludes by saying that it should be customary in ecumenical dialogues to start with the common aspects of faith and life of the Churches which could be found in the life of the Church of the first centuries when it was a single *oikoumene*.

I am happy to present this issue of Christian Orient with a beautiful exhortation given by Pope Francis in his Address to the Delegation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople on June 28, 2013. He said, "The search for unity among Christians is an urgency from which today, more than ever, we cannot subtract ourselves. In our world, hungry and thirsty for truth, love, hope, peace and unity, it is important for our own witness to be able to, finally, proclaim with one voice the happy news of the Gospel and to celebrate together the Divine Mysteries of our new life in Christ! We know well that unity is primarily a gift from God for which we must pray incessantly for, but to all of us have the task of preparing the conditions, of cultivating the ground of the heart, so that this extraordinary grace will be received".

Dr. Sebastian Vaniyapurackal
Section Editor

Emmanuel Nidiry: A Champion of Ecumenism

Dr. George Kanjirakkatt

The Church of St Thomas Christians or Suriani¹ Church of India remained united and retained their spiritual inheritance in a wonderful manner among the multi Indian religious context² until the arrival of Portuguese missionaries in sixteenth century. The Thomas Christians welcomed them as brethren in faith³ and at the beginning there was good relationship between Chaldean bishops and Portuguese missionaries.⁴ But it did not last long due to the diverse policy of the missionaries.⁵ The two important evangelisation organs of the Western Church, *Propaganda Fide*

and *Padroado* occupied their position sturdily over the Suriani Church by dividing an ancient and apostolic community into two under the guise of making them more Catholic by abolishing the law of Thomas and bringing them under the Latin rule or Latin ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

The disappointed Suriani Christians, under the leadership of archdeacon and priests gathered on Friday 3 January 1653 in the church of Our Lady of Life at Mattancherry and resolved with a solemn

¹ Before deriving the present name Syro-Malabar Church the Christians of India were known as Suriani Christians. It is related to their liturgical language Syriac which was used from the beginning. It is important to note that this Christian Community is known by different names such as St Thomas Christians of Malabar, Mar Thoma Christians, Syrians, Syrians of Malabar, Suriani, Malabar Suriani, Malabar Chaldeans, Chaldeans of Malabar, Syro-Chaldeans, Nazaranis and Syro-Malabarians. Cf. F. THONIPPARA, *Saint Thomas Christians of India: A Period of Struggle for Unity and Self-Rule (1775-1787)*, Bangalore 1999, 4; C. VARICATT, *The Suriani Church of India: Her Quest for Autochthonous Bishops (1877-1896)*, Kottayam 1995, 1; L. K. ANANTHAKRISHNA AYYAR, *Anthropology of the Syrian Christians*, Ernakulam 1926, 1. In 1993 this Church became Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Church, headed by Major Archbishop. Cf. AAS, 85 (1993), 398-399.

² APF, *Scri. Cong. Generale*, vol. 386, f. 294^R, letter of Archdeacon Geevarghese to the Pope on 1 December 1624.

³ M. MUNDADAN, *History of Christianity in India*, vol. 1: *From the beginning up to the Middle of the Sixteenth Century*, Bangalore 1989, 30.

⁴ E. TISSERANT, *Eastern Christianity in India: A history of the Syro-Malabar Church from the earliest time to the present day, authorised adaptation from the Fench* by E.R. Hambey, Bombay-Calcutta 1957, 28.

⁵ For details see G. Kanjirakkatt, *Emmanuel Nidiry: The Promoter of Autonomy and Unity of the Church of St. Thomas Christians*, Kottayam, 2011, 9-15.

oath not to obey Archbishop Garcia or any other prelates from the Society of Jesus and not to admit any Jesuits to their Churches. This revolt is known to history as *Coonan Cross Oath*.⁶ The *Coonan Cross Oath* was not against the Pope or the Church of Rome, but against the archbishop Garcia and the Jesuits who disobeyed the orders of Pope by taking away the prelate whom the Pope had sent to them.⁷ The letter of archdeacon to the Goan inquisition on 30 June 1656 is a clear proof for the same:

Like all other Churches recognise the holy Roman church as mother and head, we as her children, do the same and will always obey all

the successors who sit and preside on the chair of St. Peter. We know that baptized have to obey the Roman Church and her Pontiffs. Having been said that the Patriarch was sent by His Holiness Innocent, we have obeyed him in conformity with his letter. And for this reason we have done it and not for distancing from Roman Church. We affirm it by oath.⁸

Archdeacon also wrote that "if we are mistaken, it is out of our ignorance and not out of malice".⁹ The *Coonan Cross Oath* caused great confusion in Malabar and gradually they were divided into two:

⁶ Cf. J. KOLLAPARAMBIL, *St. Thomas Christians' Revolution in 1653*, Kottayam 1981, 140; J. PERUMTHOTTAM, "Synod of Diamper and the Subsequent Events which Led to the Coonan Cross Oath of 1653", Joint International Commission for Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, *Papers and Joint Statements 1899-2000*, Kottayam 2001, 519; J. THEKKEDATH, *The Troubled Days of Francis Garcia S. J. Archbishop of Kodungallur (1641-59)*, Roma 1972, 60; Fonti, II-VIII, 53; P. PALLATH, *The Grave Tragedy of the Church of St Thomas Christians and the Apostolic Mission of Sebastiani*, Changanacherry 2006, 15-29.

⁷ APF, *Scrit. Orig. Cong. Generale*, 233, f. 114^r, report of Marcellus on 1 June 1659; Cf. P. PALLATH, *The Catholic Church in India*, Roma 2003, 85-86.

⁸ APF, *Scrit. Orig. Cong. Generale*, vol. 233, f. 286^v, "E così come tutte le altre chiese riconoscono la Santa chiesa di Roma per capo e madre, e noi come figlioli di quella facciamo l'istesso e sempre ubbidiamo a tutti li successori, che sederono e presiderono nella Cathedra di S. Pietro, essendo che tutti li battezzati devono ubbidire alla chiesa Romana, alla sua sommi Pontifici e così essendo ci detto che il Patriarca era mandato da Sua Santità Innocenza quale abbiamo ubbidito tutti conforme la sua lettera e per questa ragione e non per allontanarci dalla chiesa Romana abbiamo operato e fatto quanto si è detto; e così affermiamo col giuramento". Letter of archdeacon on 30 June 1656, originally it was written in Malayalam later translated to Portuguese and then to Italian. Cf. APF, *Scrit. Orig. Cong. Generale*, vol. 232, f. 13-15.

⁹ APF, *Scrit. Orig. Cong. Generale*, vol. 232, f. 14^r, "Se abbiamo errate, non è stato per malizia, ma per ignoranze". Cf. also APF, *Scrit. Orig. Cong. Generale*, 233, f. 287^r. In reality Atallah was not sent by the Pope, it was clear from the Brief *Gratum Nobis*, dated 22 January 1660 addressed to the St Thomas Christians, where the Pope Alexander VII officially informed them that Atallah was not sent "neither by Innocent X of happy memory nor by any other Roman Pontiff, Our predecessor, but under the pretext of a false apostolic mission he tried to deceive your simplicity...". Cf. *Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae*, tom. 2, 98; G. T. MACKENZIE, "History of Christianity in Travancore" in V. M. NAGAM AIYA (ed.) *The Travancore State Manual*, vol. 2, New Delhi- Madras 1989, 184. Fonti, II-VIII, 53.

Pazhayakuttukar, the old group, who maintained the Catholic faith and the old practices and the *Puthenkuttukar*, the new group, who in the course of time accepted Jacobitism and the Antiochene liturgy and canonical traditions.¹⁰

At the end of the nineteenth century Emmanuel Nidiry, the undisputed leader of the Suriani Church, became the inspiring force in the struggle for liberation and unification of the divided Church. Emmanuel was born on 27 May 1842¹¹ as the second son of Ittiyavira and Rosa. His official name is Emmanuel A. Nidiry or E. A. Nidiry.¹² His vision, love for the Church and above all his genuine efforts for the unity and autonomy of the Suriani Church have secured him the title the Father of ecumenical movements. His friendship with the Jacobite leaders, especially with Mar Dionysius V facilitated him to speed up the ecumenical movements. In this article,

we are trying to unveil the efforts of Emmanuel Nidiry for the unification of the separated brethren and the foundation of the Syrian National Union Association of Malabar or *Nazrani Jāthyakya Samgham* by Emmanuel Nidiry and Mar Dionysius V with an aim of greater union of all Suriani Christians. He dreamed of a unity and catholicity which recognizes the equality of the various Apostolic Churches.

1. The Ecumenical Efforts of Emmanuel Nidiry after the Grave Tragedy

Unfortunately, after the *Coonan Cross Oath*¹³ of 1653, the Suriani Christians of Malabar, which remained one and united up to fifteenth century had under gone many changes and originated different religious communities.¹⁴ Ever since the split of 1653, there was a strong desire between the two sections of Surianis to end the division and

¹⁰ J. KALLARANGATT, "Nidhirickal Manikathanar (1842-1904) The Mahatma of the Syrian Christian Community of India: A Death Centenary tribute", in *CO* 25 (2004) 5; J. KOLLAPARAMBIL, *St. Thomas Christians' Revolution in 1653*, 142-148.

¹¹ The year '1842' was most significant in the history of Suriani Church; primarily it was the death centenary year of Mar Joseph Cariattil who was the leader of the liberation struggle of the Suriani Church in the eighteenth century. Secondly, it was the third centenary year of the coming of Francis Xavier to India. It seems that the history gave birth to another great Thomas Christian to lead the Suriani Church to autonomy and unity in the nineteenth century.

¹² The name Emmanuel A. Nidiry appears as E. A. Nidiry or Mani Nidiry in Roman documents and manuscripts. In the manuscripts he himself wrote as E. A. Nidiry. His family name is cited variously in the documents as Nidiry, Nidhiry, Nidiri, Nidhiri, Nidhiyiri, Nidhirickal, Nidhiyirickal etc. Mani Nidiry or 'Manikathanar', his popular Malayalam name is a combination of two words namely Mani and *Kathanar*. The name Mani is equivalent to Emmanuel in English. The word *Kathanar* refers to a Suriani priest, therefore literally Manikathanar means Father Emmanuel or Don Manuele in Italian. In this work we are using the official name Emmanuel Nidiry. Cf. G. NEDUNGATT, "Manikathanar in Centenary Retrospect", *OCP* 70 (2004) 314.

¹³ For the details and the after effect of *Coonan Cross oath* and the Apostolic mission of Joseph of St. Mary Sebastiani, the Apostolic Commissary appointed by the Roman Pontiff, see P. PALLATH, *The Grave Tragedy of the Church of St Thomas Christians and the Apostolic Mission of Sebastiani*, Changanassery 2006.

¹⁴ APF, *Cong. Particolari* 1750, f. 114^R, letter of Mar Thoma to the Pope in 1748. Original in Syriac.

for which many efforts were made. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the aspiration for the union became more and more relevant due to the political, educational and social situations of the country.

Emmanuel Nidiry had started to launch out his scheme to bring back all the Suriani Christians to the bosom of the Catholic Church and to utilize their entire resources for the development of the Suriani community. His family background also helped him in this task: his step mother was a Jacobite convert and he had several influential Jacobite relatives and friends. He was friendly with the Jacobite bishop Mar Doinysius Pulikkott and the lay leader Varghese Mappila Kandathil. Moreover, his high educational qualifications and his extraordinary qualities opened diverse ways and opportunities to contact the other Christian separated brethren and their leaders and vice versa.

1.1. The Efforts of Mar Dionysius V (1866-1909) for Re-union

Parallel to Emmanuel Nidiry, Mar Dionysius V was leader of the Jacobites, the separated group. He was troubled by the internal conflict in the Church. At the same time, he wanted to keep up the old Suriani traditions. Therefore, he was searching for a permanent solution. The common interest brought the two leaders closer and closer. Understanding the important role of the Suriani community in the social set up of the

country, with much expectation both leaders planned together various novel projects for re-union. The genuine efforts of Mar Dionysius V for the reunion is very clear from the letter of Carmelite missionary Leopold on 8 March 1874 to the Prefect of Propaganda Fide:

The subjections of the Latins and Suriani Catholics to a common superior (head) is a great obstacle for the return of the heretical Nestorians in the bosom of the Church. ...Among the four Nestorian bishops, Mar Dionysius is the most gentle. ...On last February, he has visited me secretly with a Suriani priest, a friend of ours and informed clearly his desire to reunite with the Catholic Church along with clergy and his 53,000 faithful. At last, he requested me to accompany him to visit the vicar apostolic. Late in the night, I took him to the vicar apostolic. They discussed the above mentioned matters. If such a unity is made possible, without much delay the union of Jacobites and Nestorians will take place. Both groups openly hate their own bishops and show their readiness for being under a superior exclusively for the Suriani Catholics.¹⁵

¹⁵ ACO, *Scritture Riforme Congregazioni Malabaresi* 1862-1877, f. 248^{R-V}, "I eretici Nestoriani a rientrare nel grembo delle chiese facendo sia un grande ostacolo il doversi a assoggettare ad un superiore comune ai Latini ed ai Soriani. ... Il vescovo Nestoriano di nome Mar Dionysius l'unico fra i quattro vescovi eretici Nestoriani che sia d'irreprensibile condotto. ... Nel febbraio di spirato, si porta segretamente con un nostro sacerdote cattolico

Nevertheless, the missionaries looked at their re-union efforts with suspicion because they feared that they would lose their hold in Malabar, if Rome were to admit and appoint him as a bishop of the Thomas Christians.¹⁶ We have an important letter of Aiuti, the apostolic delegate of India explaining the negative attitude of the missionaries regarding the reunion efforts through the new association:

... As Your Eminence knows since sometimes the Satan has aroused a certain movement of mutual liking between the Surianis and the Jacobites to which it has given the name of national spirit, making them to believe that a great nation could be formed if they unite together in the field of education and in other similar matters and Mar Dionysius, who pretends since more than 20 years that he could

convert together with a great part of his people, through his words and deeds tries all means to form this fraternity. The Holy See has already prohibited the union of the Catholics with the Jacobites in matters regarding education and for this reason there is no more danger. Mar Dionysius and other fanatics who stand for this union are dissatisfied of it. But they cannot do anything.¹⁷

2. The Birth of Syrian National Union Association of Malabar (*Nazrani Jāthiaikia Samgham*)

In spite of the resistance from the missionaries Emmanuel Nidiry, ever proud of Suriani traditions, continued his efforts to bring together the two groups more closely. Understanding that the reunion at the Church-level could not be effected soon, Emmanuel

siriaco suo accompagnatore presso di me esperendomi chiaramente il desiderio suo e del suo clero e popolo che conta circa di 53,000 (cinquantatremila) amici, di sottomettersi interamente alla S. Chiesa Cattolica, e infine mi pregò di accompagnarlo presso il Vic. ap. che desidera incontrare. Io lo accompagnai alla residenza del nostro Vic. ap. già a notte avanzata aveva si trattarono unanimemente le cose di cui sopra. Io credo dal tutto insieme poter aspirare che se tal Dionisio alquanto facilitato essa avverrebbe immediatamente e sarebbe senza serena dubbio seguita dall' unione del resto di Nestoriani e Giacobiti. Che protestano pubblicamente i loro vescovi e si mostrano apertamente disposti a sottomettersi ad un Vic. ap. che forse superiore esclusivo dei Soriani cattolici". Letter of Leopold to Propaganda Fide on 8 March 1874.

¹⁶ J. KOLLAPARAMBIL, "Mar Dionysius the Great of Malabar for the One True Fold", *OCP* 30 (1964) 148-192.

¹⁷ ACO, *Scri. Rife. Cong. Malabaresi* 1878-1889, f. 1431^R, "... Ha da qualche tempo in qua il demonio, come l'eminenza vostra sa, ha suscitato tra i soriani e i Giacobiti, un certo movimento di vicendevole simpatia a cui ha fatto dare il nome di spirito nazionale, facendo loro credere che potrebbero formare una grande nazione se si unissero insieme nell' insegnamento ed in altre cose simili e Mar Dionisio che da oltre 20 anni sta fingendo di volersi convertire insieme ad una grande parte dei suoi, colla voce e coll'opera tenta ogni via per fomentare siffatta fratellanza. La s. sede ha già proibito l' unione dei cattolici coi Giacobiti in ciò che riguarda l' insegnamento, e per questa parte non vi è più pericolo. M. Dionisio ed altri fanatici per quell' unione, ne sono scontentissime, ma non possono far nulla". Letter of Aiuti to the Propaganda Fide on 13 April 1889.

Nidiry put forward a new project of working together in social and educational fields and an action plan for a united association was developed by Emmanuel Nidiry in collaboration with Mar Dionysius under the name *Jāthiaikia Samgham*.¹⁸ The unity of the Suriani Church was a great dream of Emmanuel Nidiry and in Syrian national association of Malabar he anticipated the future unity of the separated brethren. The association was named as *Nazrani Jāthyakya Samgham*,¹⁹ or the Syrian National Union Association of Malabar.²⁰ When the governor of Madras visited Cochin in 1882, he gave his blessings to the organization.²¹ Its main objective was to work for the uplift of the Surianis in social, cultural, educational, and economic fields.

2.1. The Ecumenical Relevance of the Association

The aim of the association was not exactly as the Roman formula conveyed by Aiuti namely return or reunion or conversion.²² Though in the rules of the 'Syrian National Union Association in Malabar' there is no explicit mention of the conversion of the Jacobites, in the annotation added by Nidiry,

we read, Note to the 9th rule. "This rule is made with the intention of converting the Jacobites by the means of good education given by the Catholic teachers or members of religious orders".²³ In another marginal note it is written, "Note to the section A of the same rule. This part of the rule is intended to refute the false histories written by Protestant authors etc. and to establish debating lecturers to prove the veracity of the Catholic faith and the inconsistency of heresies under the pretension that we are attacking the protestant errors which also is another means to convert the Jacobites".²⁴

It is important to note here how Emmanuel Nidiry tried to correct the mistakes made by the missionaries and foreign historians about the history of the Suriani Church. In the statutes of the association as a sub-note to the 13th rule we read:

As many historians in the foreign languages on account of their ignorance of the facts, the vernacular etc. have adulterated the history of the Syrians and as their communication with the Protestants has grievously wounded their old

¹⁸ E. TISSERANT, *Eastern Christianity in India:*, 155.

¹⁹ ACO, *Seri. Rife. Cong. Malabaresi* 1878-1889, ff. 1259^R-1266^R, the Malayalam version of the statutes of the association.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, ff. 1267^R-1274^R, the English version of the statutes of the association. See also ARSI, *Missione Cottayam (Franciae)* 1005, fasc. I, 11. See also VARICATT C., *The Suriani Church of India: Her Quest for Autochthonous Bishops (1877- 1896)*, Kottayam 1995, 515-523.

²¹ Cf. V. C. GEORGE, *Nidhry Manikathanar*, (Mal.), Ernakulam 1950, 2nd ed. by J. Pellissery, Kottayam 1994, 368-369.

²² ACO, *Seri. Rife. Cong. Malabaresi* 1878-1889, f. 1363, Aiuti to Nidiry on 6 November 1888.

²³ ACO, *Seri. Rife. Cong. Malabaresi* 1878-1889, f. 1274^R.

²⁴ ACO, *Seri. Rife. Cong. Malabaresi* 1878-1889, f. 1274^R.

faith and morals it is desirable that the association should try to establish prizes and scholarships to those who pass examinations in those controversial matters or write essays and books to rebut the said errors.²⁵

Emmanuel Nidiry hoped that the collaboration with Jacobites in diverse manner would eventually lead to the re-union of the divided Thomas Christians into a single community (*jāti*). Commenting on *Jathiaikasangham* P. Podipara says that Emmanuel Nidiry "anticipated the ecumenical movements of today".²⁶

For the realization of the association, the founders purchased a plot of land at Kottayam, Woodland Estate consisting of 22 acres.²⁷ On 1 May 1886, Agliardi, the apostolic delegate, wrote to Rome about the purchase of the Woodland Estate for the Syrian National Union Association, under the leadership of Emmanuel Nidiry and presented the request of Mar Dionysius to send

missionaries to teach English at the schools going to be started by the association:

The Rev. Nidiry (an excellent Suriani Catholic Priest) and Mar Dionysius (metropolitan of the Jacobites) have purchased a property in Kottayam for the Syrian National Association of Malabar and the elected Metropolitan insists to have English teachers of some religious order.²⁸

I. C. Chacko reports that "the larger part of the amount required to buy the plot was raised from the Catholic side by the efforts of Fr. Nidiry".²⁹ A. Pareparambil, affirms that the Catholic Syrians contributed a sum of 4000 Rupees to purchase the Woodland Estate.³⁰ Bernard Thoma states, it was decided to start a college at Kottayam for the benefit of the Syrians belonging to both the *Pazhayacoor* and *Puthencoor* sections. Unfortunately, the plan of Emmanuel Nidiry to start a mixed college at Woodland Estate under the Syrian National Association for

²⁵ ACO, *Scri. Rife. Cong. Malabaresi* 1878-1889, f. 1270.

²⁶ P. PODIPARA, *Hierarchy of the Syro-Malabar Church*, Alleppey, 1976, 175.

²⁷ For the details of the transaction see, V. C. GEORGE, *Nidhiri Manikathanar*, 388-389.

²⁸ APF, *Scri. Rife. Cong. Indie Orientali*, 2 Semestre 1885-1886, vol. 26, f. 533^R, "Il Rev. Nidiry (Ottimo Sacerdote cattolico soriano) e Mar Dionysius (metropolitano dei Giacobiti) hanno acquistato una proprietà in Kottayam per l'associazione Nazionale Siro Malabarice e che il sull'eletto Metropolita insiste per avere maestri inglesi di qualche ordino religioso". Agliardi to Msgr. Jacobini, secretary of the Propaganda Fide on 1 May 1886.

²⁹ I. C. CHACKO, *Mar Luis Pazheparambil Jeevithavum Kalavum* (Malayalam), Trivandrum 1937, 498. For the details of the fund collection from the different parishes, see V. C. GEORGE, *Nidhiri Manikathanar*, 390-391.

³⁰ A. PAREPARAMBIL, *An Account of a Very Important Period of the History of the Catholic Syrians of Malabar*, Puthenpally (Ernakulam) 1920, 148. Here he quotes Lavigne.

providing opportunities to the Suriani Christians for higher education³¹ and for converting the Jacobites by means of good education was not materialised. His superior Bishop Lavigne could not tolerate a Catholic bishop cooperates with a heretical and schismatic bishop on an equal footing.³² *Propaganda* also collected information's about the association³³ and based on the decision of Cardinals in the general meeting on 20 December 1886,³⁴ the Propaganda entrusted Aiuti to reject informally the plan of the association with a letter on 19 September 1887:

As declared in the letter of Your Eminence to the Surianis on 20 July, the Holy See will take care to establish a College for them, being unable to permit the said dangerous association.³⁵

Moreover, Simeoni instructed Aiuti how he should prevent informally the foundation of the dangerous national Syro-Malabar association for education; planned by Nidiry in collaboration with the Jacobite Metropolitan Mar Dionysius.³⁶

Surrendering the plot to the Jacobites without any settlements was a heavy loss to the Catholic community and was extremely painful to Emmanuel Nidiry who was chiefly responsible for buying the plot. On 24 May 1899 Emmanuel Nidiry wrote a letter to Msgr. Bernard, the archbishop of Verapoly concerning the same:

I tried my best to acquire the friendship of all Jacobite prelates and many of the chief members of their community, both clergy and laity, and after long discussions and consultations for many years I got their consent to make an association which, as Your Grace may have known, was called the Syrian National Union Association, and brought the property, which is at present called 'Manorama', in the name of Mar Dionysius and myself as founders of such an association in order to establish there a college which should be conducted by the European Roman Catholic teachers and

³¹ Cf. ACO, *Scri. Rife. Cong. Malabaresi* 1878-1889, f. 1274^r.

³² "The college scheme was finally crashed by the opposition of the Romo-Syrians' European Bishops. Suspicious of any furtiveness with heretics, and distrusting Nidiry's claim that he had the secret consent of Mar Dionysius to abjure Jacobitism and become catholic after the establishment of the College; they forced the Romo-Syrians to drop the college proposal and the Wood land Estate in 1885". Cfr. R. JEFFRY, *The Decline of Nair Dominance*, New Delhi 1976, 124. We will see in the next chapter more about the unrealized mixed college.

³³ For the details see, G. KANJIRAKKATT, *Emmanuel Nidiry...*, 133-138.

³⁴ ACO, *ACTA* 1886, vol. 17, f. 530^v; ACO, *Ponenze* 1886, 1092.

³⁵ ACO, *Lettere e Decreti* 1887, vol. 20, f. 336^{r-v}, "Quando per altro la S. V. Rma dichiarato nella lettera a stampa diretta ai Soriani nella data 20 Luglio p. p. che la S. Sede si prenderà la cura di fondare per loro un Collegio, e non potendosi in verun conto permettere la detta pericoloso associazione".

³⁶ ACO, *Scri. Rife. Cong. Malabaresi* 1878-1889, f. 1297; ACO, *Lettere e Decreti* 1887, vol. 20, f. 336. Simeoni to Aiuti on 19 September 1887.

likewise got the secret consent of Mar Dionysius to abjure Jacobitism and become Catholic after the establishment of such a college. ... But alas! The whole plan was upset by the opposition of His Lordship Mgr. Lavigne, who thought the conversion of the Jacobites was a very easy matter as their head. Mar Dionysius was in our favor and that a Jesuit college on the proposed spot would be better than a joint college of Syrians and, therefore, pressed me and Mar Dionysius to make over the property in His Lordship's name and when we did not consent to that H. L. compelled me to quit the association bungalow and property which were in my sole possession and consequently the Jacobites became masters of the same.³⁷

It was so painful for Emmanuel Nidiry to see the negative attitude of Lavigne towards the Syrian National Union Association of Malabar, and surrendering the property of the Association to Jacobites unconditionally. Though the attempt of Syrian National Association of Malabar was aborted by Rome, Emmanuel Nidiry continued his reunion efforts.

3. The Nazrani Deepika

In the course of time, Emmanuel Nidiry felt the need of a journal especially as the organ of the Syrian National Union Association to communicate its projects and mission to the people. However, the association in its nascent stage was not in a position to afford a new press. Since there was a press at Mannanam, it was easy to get it printed there. A petition was submitted with the signature of more than 30 priests and leaders of the community to Marcellino for the permission.³⁸ The response was positive:

I grant permission according to the request. But, I appoint Rev. Fr. Mani Nidiry as the chief editor and the responsible person for this mission. There should not be any trouble to the members of the convent and no involvement of the members of the convent should be expected.³⁹

The sanction of the bishop was really recognition of Nidiry's talent as journalist and the approval of the new movement. Moreover, the bishop did not want the Carmelite priests to be involved in this undertaking. Emmanuel Nidiry was too busy to take over the responsibility of publishing a newspaper. He signed the declaration before

³⁷ A. M. NIDIRY, *Father Nidiry A History of His Times*, Kottayam 2003, 219. The original was quoted from the personal diary of Emmanuel Nidiry.

³⁸ For the petition, see V. C. GEORGE, *Nidhry Manikathanar*, 389.

³⁹ For the original letter, see the records of the Mannanam Ashram press. Cf. J. J. NIDIRY, *Nidhiyirickal Manikathanar Kalathinte Saradhi*, 31.

the government and suggested the name *Nazrani Deepika*.

The first copy of the *Nazrani Deepika* was published on 15 April 1887,⁴⁰ with the editorial of Emmanuel Nidiry.⁴¹ As a slogan, a passage from the letter of St. Paul to Ephesians was written below the main title that was a call for Christian unity and fellowship.⁴² Thus, Emmanuel Nidiry became the founder-editor and the Verapoly-appointed manager of the first Malayalam Daily,⁴³ which later evolved gradually into the most important Catholic newspaper of India with only a slight change in name.⁴⁴ Later, it was under the inspiration and blessing of Emmanuel Nidiry that another daily called *Malayala Manorama* was established by his Jacobite friend Kandathil Varghese Mappila.⁴⁵

4. The Joint Efforts for Re-union

The apostolic delegate Aiuti met Mar Dionysius at the residence of bishop Lavigne,

at Kottayam. Nidiry was present there as an interpreter. The central theme for the discussions was the reunion of the Jacobites. When Aiuti asked about the declaration of reunion, in front of some specially invited bishops and priests, Aiuti wrote, "Like a fish that try to escape from the hands, Mar Dionysius was trying to escape".⁴⁶ For this Mar Dionysius had his own explanation that he was trying to influence first, those parish priests having more members and the priests having some affection to the Catholic Church and thus slowly to convert the whole community.⁴⁷

After the conference Aiuti had gathered a negative impression about the conversion and reunion of Mar Dionysius and therefore he openly wrote to Rome:

For me Dionysus has been a true mystery until now and I fear that he will be always the same ... Further, he is always a hesitant and

⁴⁰ T. MOOLAYIL, *Nidhirickal Manikathanar Anayatha Deepam* (Malayalam), Kuravilangad 2004, 31-32.

⁴¹ For the editorial of Emmanuel Nidiry, see J. J. NIDIRY, *Nidhiyirickal Manikathanar Kalathinte Saradhi* (Malayalam), 2nd edition, Kuravilangad 2003, 117-118.

⁴² "Eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace", Ephesians 4: 3. Cf. T. MOOLAYIL, *Nidhirickal Manikathanar Anayatha Deepam*, 63.

⁴³ Cf. BERNARD THOMA, *Mar Thoma Kristianikal* (Malayalam) 2nd edition, Kottayam, 1992, 804.

⁴⁴ From 1938 onwards, this daily is known as *Deepika*.

⁴⁵ "In 1887 under the auspices of the Syrian National Union Association. Fr. Nidiry established Nasarani Deepika, the oldest Malayalam Newspaper. Two years later Varghese Mappilai formed the first Joint Stock Company in Travancore to found Malayala Manorama the most famous Malayalam newspaper, whose present offices stand on the land Fr. Nidiry acquired for the unsuccessful college" Cf. R. JEFFRY, *The Decline of Nair Dominance*, New Delhi 1976, 124; T. MOOLAYIL, *Nidhirickal Manikathanar Anayatha Deepam*, 33.

⁴⁶ ACO, *Scri. Rife. Cong. Malabaresi* 1878-1889, f. 1402^v. "Gli proposi d'intendersi fin da ora con una parte i quei Vescovi, di scegliere un buon numero di preti, e di riunire gli uni agli altri in una specie di Sinodo e la dichiararsi Cattolica. Molti seguirebbero lui quei Vescovi e quei preti. Egli pero che quando si trova alle strette è solito di sfuggire come un pesce sfugge dalle mani". Aiuti to Simeoni on 30 March 1889.

⁴⁷ ACO, *Scri. Rife. Cong. Malabaresi* 1878-1889, f. 1402^v.

undecided man. The fixed idea in his mind is to make the union of the Jacobites and Catholics of Malabar as a nation, and to become the spiritual head of that community under the title of Patriarch of Malabar.⁴⁸

On 11 August 1888, Mar Dionysius wrote to the Holy Father,⁴⁹ and sent his letter to Aiuti with a covering letter,⁵⁰ also the English translation of the letter by Nidiry.⁵¹ In the covering letter Mar Dionysius explained his need for help.⁵² Aiuti sent both letters, Malayalam and English to Rome with an Italian translation.⁵³ Referring to the objection of Lavigne to begin a mixed college, Mar Dionysius requested the Pope to grant necessary permission to start lower schools jointly:

If it be so a permission granted to establish a great college by them in order not to violate the usage of their order & some lower schools by us & the Catholics jointly to avoid the above mentioned obstacles & spirit of animosity, would be the means of removing all the difficulties.⁵⁴

Mar Dionysius informed bishop Lavigne that the half part of the property would be given to the Catholics for a college and the rest of the property would be utilized to start a school jointly. For this, Mar Dionysius had sufficient reason, "to convince the Jacobite community that the money collected from them is used properly".⁵⁵ He also suggested that the administration of the school must be under the two bishops.

⁴⁸ ACO, *Scritture Riforme Congregazione Malabaresi* 1878-1889, f. 1403^R, "Per me Mar Dionisio è stato finora un vero enigma e temo che lo sarà sempre... oltre diche egli è un uomo sempre titubante ed indeciso. Ha in mente l'idea fissa di fare l'unione dei Giacobiti e cattolici del Malabar in una sola nazione, e di divenire egli stesso il Capo spirituale sotto il nome di Patriarcha del Malabar". Aiuti to Simeoni on 30 March 1889.

⁴⁹ ACO, *Scritture Riforme Congregazione Malabaresi* 1890-1892, ff. 2049^R-2052^R. This is the original Malayalam letter with the emblem and the signature of Mar Dionysius, written from Alappuzha.

⁵⁰ ACO, *Scritture Riforme Congregazione Malabaresi* 1890-1892, ff. 2047-2048, the covering letter of Dionysius to Aiuti on 19 August 1888.

⁵¹ ACO, *Ibid.*, ff. 2053^R-2056^R. The English translation by Nidiry. For the letter see appendix IV.

⁵² ACO, *Scritture Riforme Congregazione Malabaresi* 1890-1892, f. 2047^V, "The Royal appeal which I mention of in that letter is to come on within two or three months. Therefore, if I am get any help I desire that it should be as early as possible".

⁵³ For the Italian translation of Aiuti, see ACO, *Scritture Riforme Congregazione Malabaresi* 1890-1892, ff. 2034^R-2044^R.

⁵⁴ ACO, *Scritture Riforme Congregazione Malabaresi* 1890-1892, f. 2056.

⁵⁵ ACO, *Scritture Riforme Congregazione Malabaresi* 1878-1889, ff. 1349^V-1350^R, "In questa occasione M. Lavigne è tornato nuovamente a parlarmi del collegio esponendo come Mar Dionisio propone ora: 1°. che la metà del terreno esistente in Cottayam sia data al Vicario Apostolico in piena proprietà per fondarvi un gran collegio, e 2°. che nell'altra metà si apra una scuola inferiore dipendente dal collegio la quale però dovrebbe avere un carattere misto a fine di salvare l'amor proprio dei Giacobiti e mostrar loro che le collette di denaro fatte in mezzo a loro hanno prodotto un frutto". Aiuti to Simoni on 16 October 1888. Here Aiuti quotes the letter of Lavigne to Aiuti on 8 October 1888, see *Ibid.*, ff. 1353^V-1354^R.

4.1. The Negative Response of Rome and the Reaction of Mar Dionysius

The response from Rome to the letter of Mar Dionysius was not positive. Based on the instructions received from Rome⁵⁶ Aiuti informed Lavinge that even in the case of the school there should not be any relation with the Jacobites.⁵⁷ The letter of Rome did not create a good impression on Mar Dionysius. He expressed his discontentment on Rome's refusal even to the idea of the lower school jointly by the Catholics and the Jacobites under the name of national association of Malabar. He told Nidiry:

That to him no other alternative remains than that of opening a school in the place that was previously bought with the purpose of establishing a school under the title 'School of National Union'. If the Catholics are not ready to join this project and not interested to send their children to this school, they can take any part of the property of the Kottayam as a donation of Mr. Dharrah.⁵⁸

The negative response of Rome to the letter of Mar Dionysius certainly decelerated the unification movement. But with hope Mar Dionysius continued his efforts for reunification. Meanwhile Nidiry informed Aiuti of the new development in Malankara:

In order to avert the unification movement of Jacobite community with the Catholics and to check the relations of Jacobite priests with bishop Lavigne and Mani Nidiry, the Jacobite bishops planned to convene a synod. Therefore if the permission is granted all of a sudden either to Your Grace [Aiuti] or to Msgr. Lavinge for the absolution of the married clergy, it would help to receive many Jacobite priests to Catholic communion before the synod and thereby with the help new converted priests to make propagation against synod.⁵⁹

Though there was strong opposition from the part of Rome to the unification efforts of Syrian National Union Association,

⁵⁶ ACO, *Lettere e Decreti* 1888, vol. 21, ff. 335^v-336, 21 September 1888, reply to Mar Dionysius.

⁵⁷ ACO, *Scri. Rife. Cong. Malabaresi* 1878-1889, f. 1360^v, Aiuti to Propaganda Fide on 10 November 1888.

⁵⁸ ACO, *Scri. Rife. Cong. Malabaresi* 1890-1892, fasc. 2, f. 2058^{r-v}, "Quanto alla parte della stessa lettera la quale non accorda l'erezione di una scuola inferiore per l'unione nazionale cattolica Giacobita sua grazia mi esprime il più profondo dispiacere, e mi disse che egli ormai non ha altra alternativa che quella di aprire una scuola nello stesso luogo, che precedentemente era stato comprato allo scopo di stabilirvi una scuola sotto il titolo di Scuola Dell'Unione Nazionale, che se i cattolici non ameranno di unirvi a quest' opera ne vorranno mandare i loro figli a siffatta scuola, allora prenderanno la parte che loro compete tanto nella comune proprietà esistente in Cottayam come nella donazione di Mr. Darragh". Copy of the Nidiry to Aiuti on 16 November 1888.

⁵⁹ Letter of Nidiry to Aiuti on 29 August 1890, see V. C. GEORGE, *Nidhiry Manikathanar*, 541.

Nidiry continued his efforts to bring back the separate brethren to the Catholic Church.⁶⁰

4.2. The Attempt of Nidiry for the Reunion of Mar Abdiso

After the reunion, Antony Thondanatt⁶¹ served as an ordinary priest in his parish Anakallumkal until 10 January 1882, when again he changed his loyalty from Verapoly to Mellus. Understanding the lack of pastors to lead the communities of north, Mellus called Antony Thondanatt to Trichur and requested him to take care of the Mellusians of the south. Mar Abdiso Thondanatt, the new auxiliary of Mellus started administering the Mellusians of the south by staying at Elamthottam.⁶² On 5 March 1882, Mellus returned from Malabar entrusting the Mellusians to Mar Abdiso Thondanatt and the Chaldean monk Augustine.⁶³ Though Mellus himself left the schism his followers continued under the leadership of Mar Abdiso Thondanatt.

Emmanuel Nidiry, continued his work for the conversion and reunion of Mar Abdiso Thondanatt even after he became the first pontifical vicar general of the vicariate of Kottayam.⁶⁴ The first Pontifical Mass of the new vicar general was on 14 November 1889 and there arranged an encounter of two bishops, Lavigne and Abdiso under the leadership of Emmanuel Nidiry.⁶⁵ After all these continued efforts the dream of Emmanuel Nidiry did not realize, the reunion of Mar Abdiso did not happen. Thus, there added an indelible mark in the history of the Suriani Church of Malabar.

Still Nidiry continued his unification efforts with much enthusiasm. He was acceptable to the Jacobites like one of their own leaders. He spent much time in conversation with the Jacobite priests and met them personally.⁶⁶ He was given a warm welcome in main Jacobite centers like Tripunithra, Ampalloor, Kandanad,

⁶⁰ Letter of Nidiry to Aiuti on 9 August 1890, see V. C. GEORGE, *Nidiry Manikathanar*, 535.

⁶¹ Antony Thondanatt, was born circa 1827 in Anakallingal near Bharananganam, was ordained a priest under Verapoly c. 1850. He accompanied *Kathanar* Kudakkachira Antony to Babel in 1857 and returned to Malabar with Rocos in 1861. When the excommunicated Rocos returned to Babel in 1862, Thondanatt followed him. There he was consecrated bishop by the Nestorian Patriarch in 1862 and took the name Mar Abdiso. Mar Abdiso returned to Malabar in 1863, but the people did not accept him and later he submitted to Verapoly in 1865. But when Mellus arrived in Malabar, Antony again changed his mind and joined him. Later, after four years of association with Mellus, for a second time he reunited with the Catholic Church.

⁶² L. PAREPARAMBIL, *An Account of a very Important Period ...*, 24; BERNARD THOMA, *Mar Thoma Kristianikal*, 756. Here the author gives the list of the priests and the deacons who joined the schism.

⁶³ BERNARD THOMA, *Mar Thoma Kristianikal*, 761.

⁶⁴ BERNARD THOMA, *Mar Thoma Kristianikal*, 496.

⁶⁵ V. C. GEORGE, *Nidiry Manikathanar*, 496-497.

⁶⁶ Tisserant writes: "The reunion of the Jacobites become also one of the main objects of Mgr. Lavigne's activity. ... Mgr. Lavigne favoured very much the approaches made by Fr. Emmanuel Nidiry". E. TISSERANT, *Eastern Christianity in India ...*, 130.

Mulanthuruthy and Udayamperoor (Diamper)⁶⁷ and he could convert many into Catholic Church keeping their West Syrian rite.⁶⁸ Appreciating the efforts of Emmanuel Nidiry for reunion, Tisserant writes:

In recent times, a very zealous and learned priest of then vicariate apostolic of Kottayam, Fr. Emmanuel Nidiry, worked under the direction of Bishop Lavigne for the reunion of the Jacobites.⁶⁹

Meanwhile Emmanuel Nidiry informed on 17 September 1890 the main objections for the reunion efforts:

I gathered that their chief objections to be converted were two, namely 1st their forefathers after the Synod of Diamper having for half a century petitioned Rome to get Bishop of their own nation and rite had left the religion for not having heard their just petition. Now to return before being granted their petition, was to show that their forefathers were wrong in doing so. This is shameful. Second their forefathers when they

left the Catholic religion had sworn at the Cross in Mattancherry (Cochin) never more to accept a Latin Bishop as their pastoral head. Now to submit to Monsignor Lavigne, who is a Latin Bishop, is to break the oath of their forefathers. This is against their conscience and is against the practice of all Churches in the world, the Bishop of a quite different nation, rite, and liturgical language should govern the priests and people of another nation, rite and liturgical language.⁷⁰

It was clear that the objections raised by Nidiry were non-theological factors and the *Jāthaiḱya Sangham* was envisaged as the practical ecumenism to lead the non-Catholics to the full ecclesial communion that is modern ecumenism. Unfortunately his authorities could not tolerate the prophetic vision of Emmanuel Nidiry. Therefore the non-theological factors gradually underwent a mutation into dogmatic questions, investing division with dignity and destined to figure on the agenda of modern ecumenical dialogues.⁷¹ Thus the grave tragedy which took place at Mattanchery on 1653, the

⁶⁷ For the details, see V. C. GEORGE, *Nidhry Manikathanar*, 533-568.

⁶⁸ "Under Mons. Lavigne, S. J. (1887-1896), through the effects of Emmanuel Nidiry (a Thomas Christian priest), 9 (or 11?) Jacobite priests became Catholic, and they were allowed by the Holy See to use the West Syrian rite". Cf. P. PODIPARA, *The Thomas Christians*, London-Bombay 1970, 215.

⁶⁹ E. TISSERANT, *Eastern Christianity in India* ..., 138.

⁷⁰ ACO, *Fascicolo Prot. No. 990/31*, 4; A. M. NIDHIRY, *Father Nidhry A History of His Times*, appendix III, F. 409, letter of Emmanuel Nidiry to Aiuti on 17 September 1890.

⁷¹ Cf. G. NEDUNGATT, "Manikathanar in Centenary Retrospect", *OCP* 70 (2004) 337.

Coonan Cross Oath, remained as an incurable wound in the heart of the Malabar Church.

Emmanuel Nidiry was an ecumenist in the true sense of the word and he dreamt of the union of Suriani Christians. He worked hard day and night for the same in spite of the resistance from his ecclesiastical superiors. Though his attempts for unity were discouraged and misinterpreted by the then foreign authorities in Malabar, later the Second Vatican Council would ratify his vision as ideal and genuine. While fighting against schism inside the Church, he had a wider vision of Christian unity. For Nidiry unity of the Church was a communion of Churches and not mere conversion of persons in to the Catholic Church. If the union efforts of Nidiry were realised at his time there would have emerged another picture of the Suriani Church in modern times.

Conclusion

The ecclesiological vision of Emmanuel Nidiry was so wide and profound that he dreamed of a single Syrian Christian Community in Malabar. His goal was to lead the divided community to a concordance, namely to the unity of all the St Thomas Christians, as existed up to the *Coonan* Cross Oath. One could easily affirm that through his diverse approaches, novel and prophetic

ways for regaining the separated brethren he was anticipating the mind of the Second Vatican Council, which gave a stimulus to the modern ecumenical movements. He was a prophet of ecumenism and a visionary far ahead of his time. His dream of Jacobite-reunion could be effected only twenty six years after his death through Mar Ivanios.⁷² Pope John XXIII, who initiated a new path for the Christian ecumenism was one year old child when Nidiry spelt out an ecclesiology of communion and unity through Syrian National Union Association of Malabar or *Jāthyakya Sangham*.

Emmanuel Nidiry fought for freedom and unity and he believed that it would be possible only under the autonomous bishops to preserve the heritage and traditions of an individual Church. He had foreseen the mind of Vatican II, "the Churches of East while keeping in mind the necessary unity of the whole Church have the power to govern themselves according to their own discipline".⁷³ Emmanuel Nidiry's ecclesiological vision was based on unity and not uniformity. "... the entire heritage of spirituality and liturgy, discipline and theology in their various traditions belongs to the full, catholic and apostolic character of the Church".⁷⁴ "Far from being an obstacle to the church's unity, such diversity of customs and observances

⁷² Mar Ivanios, the metropolitan of Bethany was appointed by the Synod of bishops of the Malankara Orthodox Church held at Peumalai in Thiruvalla on 1 November 1926, to carry out the reunion efforts with the Catholic Church.

⁷³ VATICAN II, *Unitas Redintegratio*, 16.

⁷⁴ VATICAN II, *Unitas Redintegratio*, 17.

only adds to her beauty and contributes greatly carrying out her missions".⁷⁵ His ecclesial vision proposes unity in diversity and not the ecclesial uniformity.

John Paul II said on the occasion of presenting *Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium* (CCEO) to the twenty-eighth General Congregation of the Synod of Bishops on 25 October 1990 that "the Church itself gathered in the one spirit breaths as though with two lungs ... of the East and of the West and that it burns with the love of Christ in one heart having two ventricles".⁷⁶ Emmanuel Nidiry was fighting his whole life

for the above mentioned recognition of the identity and heritage of an ancient, individual and apostolic Eastern Church.

To conclude, Emmanuel Nidiry was considered by the Suriani Church as the Moses who delivered the ancient Apostolic See of Malabar from the hands of the foreign prelates. He accepted every suffering in "heroic holiness" and he was obedient to the ecclesiastical authority and showed the courage and confidence to proclaim the orthodoxy of the Suriani Church even to the last breath of his life. He will be remembered throughout the centuries as the promoter of autonomy and unity of the St Thomas Christians.



⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁷⁶ AAS, 82 (1990) 1037.

***Oikoumene* as Unity and the Quest for Unity: Historical Development and Implications**

Dr. Sabu John Panachickal

Introduction

The Church at the beginning had been one, especially during the post-biblical and early patristic era extending up to the pre-Nicene period. After this period of unity the Church has been compartmentalized into divergent denominational units because of their alleged adherence to specific theological and philosophical concepts that are actually causes of the historical problems of disunity within the Church. Accordingly, there are qualifications like Eastern and Western, Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant etc. to designate different churches and concepts that are exclusively belonging to a tradition or to a particular church. On the contrary, there are theological concepts that belong to the common arsenal of the undivided Church, however, not having the same volume of influence on the later theology and epistemological endeavours of the entire segments. In fact, the starting point of every ecumenical endeavour should be these aspects of belief that are common for every

church in conversation. Consequently, the discernment regarding the elements of faith commonly possessed by all churches assure a sense of unity among them than trying to figure out the fundamental differences. The apparent lack of universality of certain theological concepts is due to the use of different regional languages as the official liturgical and theological language in particular Churches. The outcome of all the differences, because of doctrinal, political and regional reasons, is a divided Church. The Church that was one in the beginning has eventually become divergent units.

There should be significant theological endeavours to bring back to theology the concepts of the biblical, post-biblical and pre-Nicene era for a complete and experiential idea of God rather than just identifying certain aspects of interconnectedness in order to bring unity among Christian.¹ Many of the causes of disunity are due to theological differences. Therefore, it is significant to reach

¹ Catherine Mowry LaCugna has tried to highlight this aspect of theologizing by going back to the biblical, post-biblical and pre-Nicene era to have a discourse on Trinity, salvation and Christian life. She has appealed to focus more on *oikonomia* than *theologia* in order to make theology agreeable to all. Cf. Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1993).

a theological consensus in any form of ecumenical activities. A survey on the term *oikoumene* and its derivatives throughout the history of the Church may eventually provide us with an awareness of how the Christians were once united and now divided. This discernment should be the starting point of any attempt concerning ecumenical relationships.

The Origin of the Term *Oikoumene*

The term ecumenism has its terminological origin from the Greek term *oikoumene* that has been formerly used in the Greco-Roman world to denote the inhabited universe or inhabited world. *Oikoumene* (οικουμένη) is the feminine present participle of the verb οἰκέω, (*oikeo*) meaning "to inhabit."² This term has been used in antiquity to designate earth as a whole. It is used to designate the part of the earth inhabited by human beings. The *oikoumene* or ecumene, as inhabited earth, is first described by Hecataeus of Miletus, a Greek Historian (c.550 BC- c.476 BC), who

included Europe, Asia Minor, Southwest Asia, India, and North Africa in the concept of *oikoumene*. In another sense *oikoumene* is considered to be synonymous with the Roman Empire and is used by the Byzantine emperors also to describe their imperial rule after the division of the Roman Empire into East and West.³ This development has led to calling Constantinople as the "Ecumenical City." It is also interesting to note the origin of the title "Ecumenical Patriarch." This title is honorific in nature. It is Emperor Maurice who has bestowed the title of Ecumenical Patriarch on the Patriarch of Constantinople. The intended meaning is that the Patriarch of Constantinople is the bishop of the imperial capital, the "ecumenical city." The first use of this title by the Patriarch of Constantinople has led to some kind of confusion and Pope's reprimand of the Patriarch. The then Patriarch of Constantinople, John the Faster (d.595), has started to use this title "Ecumenical Patriarch" in his correspondences to Pope Gregory I (590-604) and Pope misunderstood that this

² Oikoumene is one of the *oiko*-terms having the same etymological origin and the other terms are economy and ecology. The common human responsibility towards nature has got three dimensions as per the connotations of these terms. Accordingly, economy is the responsible and faithful management of the ecosystems and the distribution of the goods and services with equity and justice. Ecological dimension insists on the proper understanding of the environment and the mutual relationship of the different realities in it in order to use the natural resources with discretion and cohabiting with all other beings in the ecosystems focusing on the aspect of sustainable management. In line with economy and ecology ecumenism is "the responsible community of different religions and worldviews as interreligious community" that cares for creation. Therefore, there is interdependence between these terms: "economy can be sustainable only on a long term protection of the environment. The economy and the ecology will be sustainable only if people with different religious convictions learn to live together in mutual respect and peace, recognizing that all are invited as guests on earth with the same rights and obligations." Christoph Stueckelberger, *We All are Guests on Earth: A Global Christian Vision for Climate Justice* (Bangalore, Dharmaram Publications, 2010) 11-12.

³ A. P. Kazhadan, "Oikoumene," *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* vol. III (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) 1518.

was John the Faster's claim to universal jurisdiction and authority and reprimanded him indicating that there is no universal bishop and he himself is just a Servant of the Servants of God, a title still used by Popes as their designation. It is from this time on that the title "Ecumenical Patriarch" has been used as the formal title by the Patriarch of Constantinople.⁴ The controversy was over with clarification that he used the title "Ecumenical Patriarch" only because he was the Patriarch of the "ecumenical city." Here the implication for this title is that the bishop of the imperial capital or the ecumenical city is having seniority among all the eastern patriarchs. It has never been used to show any superiority over Rome.

Following the root meaning "inhabited world," during the late patristic literature, the word has obtained a definite Christian nuance of considering the world as "the scene of Christ's activity and of the celebration of the Christian sacraments, which were performed not in a single city or in a single "theater" but in the whole *oikoumene*."⁵ Here, we can find the idea of something being "universal" or "binding all" as an emerged nuance for *oikoumene*. Thus, it is obvious that in its subsequent modern usages the term has got both religious and secular implications denoting importantly the united Christian Church and world civilizations respectively. This exposition

mainly focuses on the implications of the term *oikoumene* in its ecclesiastical and theological perspectives. For this purpose it is befitting to have a look at the history of seven ecumenical councils that are approved both by the East and West. There are also councils exclusively claimed as ecumenical by Catholic Church and Orthodox Church.

The Seven Ecumenical Councils

There is a New Testament example for an ecumenical council in Acts 15, which is Jerusalem Council. This Council has been a forerunner of all the ecumenical councils that took place in the Church and also it introduced precedent for the future in settling the issues within the Church. The early Church, when faced with the advent of Judaizing teachers and the upsurge of Pharisaic sentiment in Jerusalem, gathered together in the leadership of Peter, Paul and James. It is James who formulated the decree which was a compromise on the common-table controversy.⁶ It has all the making of an ecumenical council as the apostles represented different communities in the Church. Ecumenical councils are gatherings of representatives from the ecumenical church to discuss important issues. Councils have been convened through the early centuries of the Christian church to decide doctrines on Trinity, Christology etc.⁷ A short appraisal on the

⁴ Cf. David J. Melling, "Ecumenical Patriarch," Ken Parry, et al., *The Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity* (Oxford, UK: The Blackwell Publishers, 1999) 172.

⁵ A. P. Kazhadan, "Oikoumene," 1518.

⁶ Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer and Roland E. Murphy, *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (London, Geoffrey Chapman, 1999) 751-52.

history of ecumenical councils is eventually expected to give two results; the first is the historical use of the different implications of the term *oikoumene* and the second is the identification of the different theological themes and jurisdictional issues emerged as conflicting factors during the period of the councils and how the Church that has been one *oikoumene* has become opposing groups because of these themes in the early history of the Church. In addition to these two intended results, the development of the doctrines could also be discerned, in a nutshell, that has been materialized throughout the history of the Church.

The churches of the first centuries belonged to a single *oikoumene* under the Roman Empire. By the end of the fourth century councils of churches have started in order to discuss and make decisions on important matters regarding doctrine of faith and guidelines regarding church governance. These councils have been convened by the kings who were the head of the *oikoumene*. It is in this context that *oikoumene* was also adopted within Christianity, especially for Synods called by the Emperors and comprising of bishops from all over the world. Ecumenical council thus means an assemblage in which all churches participated and accepted its teachings. Accordingly, the first seven councils of the Church are named and gradually acknowledged as "ecumenical" by the Eastern

Catholic, Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches. All these councils took place in the East and the decisions taken in the councils have been accepted as authoritative in East and West. The intention of most of the councils is to defend faith against false teachings on dogmatic contents and to condemn erroneous instructions. The dogmatic decrees pronounced by these ecumenical councils have enriched the Christian theology with new dimensions and insights in Christological, Trinitarian, ecclesial and sacramental perspectives. They have also found pastoral solutions and clarifications for the needy churches. Though these councils are said to be ecumenical or universal it should be noted that even before the convention of the council of Nicaea I in 325 there was already the first dissident group in the form of the Arians, who continued to be a separate church after they have been condemned by the council of Nicaea.⁸ It has then become a trendsetter for the coming period of the Church, which could be understood from the immediate situation that prompted the convening of each councils and the consequent separation of the dissident group from the Church. The dogmatic declarations in each ecumenical council have revealed the fact that which element of faith has been questioned by the rebellious group. The main dogmatic pronouncement of Nicaea I is "that the Son is 'of the substance of the Father'; that is, the Son is consubstantial, *homoousios*, with the

⁷Donald K. MacKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996) 63.

⁸Ken Parry and David J. Melling, "Ecumenical Councils," Ken Parry, et al., *Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity*, 171.

Father."⁹ The council fathers then condemned Arius and his teachings, according to which Jesus is only a highest created being and does not have the same substance as God the Father or having a different substance (*heterousios*).

The dogmatic declaration of the ecumenical council of Constantinople 1 (381) is regarding the Holy Spirit. It has declared that 'the Holy Spirit is fully God, who is the life-giver, proceeding from the Father, worshipped and glorified together with the Father and the Son.' In fact, this declaration has been a rewording of the Nicene faith. Nestorian heresy is at the center of attention during the ecumenical council of Ephesus in 431. Nestorius, who was the bishop of Constantinople, taught that Jesus Christ was two separate persons as well as possessing two natures.¹⁰ This teaching has been declared heretical in this ecumenical council. The other important pronouncement is that Mary is *Theotokos*. The Church of East has been autocephalous even before this ecumenical council discarded this council and teachings and as a result all other later ecumenical councils.

The difference of opinion that existed among the churches on the Christological titles and themes during the fourth century has

continued to exist also in the fifth century, however, in new forms. The prominent heretical teaching of the period has been that of Eutyches with his Monophysite position, which taught that Jesus Christ had only one nature rather than a divine and a human nature that were united in one person. Against this heretical teaching the ecumenical council of Chalcedon in 451 promulgated that 'Jesus Christ is fully divine and fully human, like us in all things apart from sin.' It is in this context the usage 'hypostatic union' came into existence, which means that Jesus Christ is "acknowledged in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the difference of the natures being in no way abolished by the union, but rather the characteristic of each nature being preserved, and concurring into one Person and one hypostasis."¹¹ It is Cyril of Alexandria who dealt with Nestorius and his teaching even before the ecumenical council of Ephesus through his letters in which he clarified the unity of the two natures in Christ. Therefore, the idea of hypostatic union given by the ecumenical council of Chalcedon was not acceptable to those who viewed it as contrary to the doctrine and language of Cyril of Alexandria. This difference of opinion has

⁹ Ken Parry and David J. Melling, "Ecumenical Councils," Ken Parry, et al., *Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity*, 171.

¹⁰ Donald K. MacKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996) 185.

¹¹ Ken Parry and David J. Melling, "Ecumenical Councils," 171. Since there is the hypostatic union of two natures in Jesus Christ and being a single person and God-man he is the subject and possessor of both divine and human attributes. Accordingly, the terms that refer to his divinity such as Word, Son of God, Logos etc and those that refer to his humanity like Son of Mary, Nazarene etc could be used to designate him. Ken Parry and David J. Melling, "Communicatio Idiomatum," Ken Parry, et al., *The Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity*, 124.

eventually resulted in the establishment of independent Oriental Orthodox Churches.¹²

The fifth ecumenical council named as Constantinople II (553) defined the consubstantiality of the three persons of the Trinity. Along with this definition, in the light of the heresies regarding the hypostatic union and controversies and false teaching on the idea of Theotokos the ecumenical council reiterated the position of previous ecumenical councils and presented the definitions with more clarity; 'the full hypostatic unity of Christ, born eternally of the Father and in time, as man, of the Theotokos.'¹³ The council also has discarded every teaching that presents Christ as two hypostases or two persons. It is based on the teaching of Cyril of Alexandria that the followers of Oriental Orthodox Churches found the teaching of Chalcedon incompatible and rejected it. Therefore, the ecumenical council of Constantinople II has taken it as a prerogative to affirm the orthodoxy of the Christological teaching of Cyril of Alexandria

and consequently condemned his opponents.¹⁴

The ecumenical council of Constantinople III (681) is known for its teaching that 'Jesus Christ has two wills and two energies or operations (*energeiai*), one divine, the other human, inseparably united in the one person.' Jesus Christ has two wills since he possessed two natures. However, two wills worked in mutual accord. This teaching was in the context of two heresies, namely Monotheletism and monoenergism.¹⁵

The ecumenical council of Nicaea II in 787 has been instrumental in making some of the faith aspects of the church more popular by allowing the sacred images of Christ, Theotokos, angles and saints to be used in churches, homes and in public. The council has approved the veneration of the images giving importance to the point that those who venerate icons or images in fact venerate the person depicted than the material used to make them. This declaration was the result of the controversy of Iconoclasm.¹⁶

¹² Ken Parry and David J. Melling, "Ecumenical Councils," 171.

¹³ Ken Parry and David J. Melling, "Ecumenical Councils," 171.

¹⁴ It is in this ecumenical council that the Christological teachings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrrhus and Ibas of Edessa were rejected and they were condemned by name as heretics. Among others who were condemned by the council is Origen because of his teaching that the Son is subordinate to the Father. Donald K. MacKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, 197.

¹⁵ According to Monotheletism, Jesus Christ had only one will. Monoenergism or monenergism is the teaching that there is only one divine energy, or action, in Jesus Christ. Monoenergism was developed by Sergius, the Patriarch of Constantinople. Donald K. MacKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, 177.

¹⁶ Ken Parry and David J. Melling, "Ecumenical Councils," 171-172. The term Iconoclasm comes from the Greek *eikonoklassia* meaning breaking of icons. Even though Byzantine Iconoclasm was of eighth and ninth century phenomenon the roots were found in the teachings of Eusebius of Caesarea (339) and Epiphanius of Salamis (403) who had opposed the use of images of Christ, Virgin Mary and saints in the context of pagan idolatry. In the eighth century during the time of Emperor Leo III and with his support two iconoclast bishops namely Theodore of Claudiopolis and Constantine of Nikoia removed icon of Christ and also ordered to get rid of all the icons from the places of worship. Cf. David Turner, "Iconoclasm," Ken Parry, et al., *The Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity*, 239-242, 239-40.

This examination of the history of the seven ecumenical councils reveals the fact that, in the context of the early Christian Church, *oikoumene* or ecumenism refers to attempts made by all churches to stand together as united in the wake of heresies and distortions from faith and tradition. The doctrinal formulations of the ecumenical councils in order to bring unity among Christian Church in the early church should be viewed as the early form of ecumenism. Ecumenical Councils have been assemblage of the prominent church leaders of the Christian communities in the Christian world to take binding decisions on matters of the laws of the Church, pastoral policy, doctrines of faith, etc. Almost all the councils have been convened in order to have the definitions on doctrines. At the same time, there were casualties of dissidents leaving the one, catholic and apostolic Church. It has been mostly because of discontentment in using some of the theological terminologies and notions that there happened disunity in the Church. There are also divisions caused by the issues and arguments regarding authority and jurisdiction. In many other instances of divisions there are the overwhelming presence of political factors because of the inseparable nature of the state and the Church. Some of the theological issues are just technical than challenging the essentials and thereby not affecting the content of faith. However, the Church is right in clarifying notions and thus eradicating any sort of doubt regarding different aspects of faith. This corrective

attitude and disciplinary canons of the Church have eventually resulted in divisions throughout the history of the Church.

Other Ecumenical Councils

Eastern Orthodox Church considers the Synod in Trullo in 692, which is also known as Quinisext Council, as ecumenical council. It has been convened by Emperor Justinian II to continue the work of the second and third Councils of Constantinople. This council's entire interest was laying down punitive canons and did not define any doctrine. Eastern Patriarchs and the delegates of the pope have signed the acts of the council and the decree of the council has been sent to Rome for the signature of Pope Sergius I. The pope has refused to sign the decrees because it was against the Western tradition. There have been several initiatives to get it approved which never happened. This council is claimed as ecumenical by Eastern Orthodox.¹⁷

In addition to these seven universally acknowledged councils, the Catholic Church recognizes a further fourteen ecumenical councils: Constantinople IV (869-70), Lateran I (1123), Lateran II (1139), Lateran III (1179), Lateran IV (1215), Lyons I (1245), Lyons II (1274), Vienne (1311-12), Constance (1414-18), Florence (1438-45), Lateran V (1512-17), Trent (1545-63), Vatican I (1869-70), and Vatican II (1962-1965). However, these councils have been accepted as ecumenical only by the communion of the Roman Catholic Churches, and are not acknowledged by the

¹⁷ David J. Melling, "Quinisext Council," Ken Parry, et al., *The Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity* (Oxford, UK: The Blackwell Publishers, 1999) 396-397.

Orthodox Church or any other churches. Of these Roman Catholic ecumenical councils Lyons II and Florence are worth mentioning for their effort to reunite East and West, though unsuccessful. The council of Lyons has made the brave move to restore communion with the Greeks. The Greeks have agreed on the issue of the *Filioque*, and union was proclaimed, but the union was later repudiated by Andronicus II. Pope Gregory X wanted to end the Great Schism that had really divided the Eastern Orthodox Church from the Roman Catholic Church and for this purpose he has sent a delegation to Michael VIII Palaeologus, who was the Emperor of Constantinople, in 1273. As a result of this mission the union of the Churches came to be proximate when Emperor Palaeologus ordered the Eastern dignitaries to go to Lyons with a letter from him representing fifty archbishops and five hundred bishops. The delegation arrived at Lyons on 24 June 1274 presenting a letter from the Emperor to Pope Gregory X. On 29 June 1274, the Feast of Peter and Paul who are patrons of the popes, Gregory celebrated Holy Mass in St John's Church, where the representatives from the Eastern Orthodox Church and Roman Catholic Church took part. During the Holy Mass the Epistle, Gospel and Creed were read in Latin and Greek. The Greeks read the Nicene Creed by singing the article "*qui a patre*

filioque procedit," a Western addition to the Nicene Creed, three times. Even though the council has been apparently a success it did not provide a permanent solution to the schism. The Emperor was keen to heal the schism, but his attempts and the decisions of the Council faced vehement opposition from the Eastern clergy. The new Patriarch of Constantinople John Bekkos then took the initiatives to have the union between Churches. His continuous attempts and sustained campaign to defend the union intellectually along with the vigorous and brutal suppression of opponents of union by Emperor Michael went futile because of the relentless opposition of the vast majority of Byzantine Christians towards union with the Latin "heretics." The death of Michael in December 1282 had put an end to the union attempt of Lyons in all sense. The successor to Michael was his son Andronicus II who opposed the union and forced the resignation of John Bekkos who was eventually exiled and imprisoned until his death in 1297.¹⁸ This Council is also of importance for its initiatives in the matter of protecting the Holy Land.

In the Council of Florence there was almost successful negotiation to effect the reunification with many of the Eastern Churches. Agreements have been reached on matters as the insertion of the phrase

¹⁸ David J. Melling, "Second Council of Lyons," Ken Parry, et al., *The Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity*, 296-297; Bruce Wetterau, *World History* (New York: Henry Holt and company, 1994) 148; Papadakis, A., *Crisis in Byzantium: the Filioque Controversy in the Patriarchate of Gregory II of Cyprus (1283-1289)* (Crestwood, New York, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997).

"Filioque" to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, the definition and number of the sacraments, and the doctrine of purgatory. Another important issue on discussion has been papal primacy, which is regarding the universal and supreme jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome over the whole Church, including the national Churches of the East such as Serbian, Greek, Bulgarian, Russian, Georgian, Armenian, etc. There has been also offer of military support against the Ottoman Turks. However, the agreements were not fully acknowledged and accepted. Many positively reacted to the decrees of the Council, may be, because of the political pressure exerted by the Byzantine Emperor. Some others out of their personal conviction such as Isidore of Kiev accepted the decrees. However, bishop Mark of Ephesus adamantly opposed the union and eventually took up the leadership of those who were against union. When the Russians heard of what happened in Florence angrily rejected the decrees.¹⁹ As a result another attempt to have union between the Greeks and the Roman Catholic Church ended up as fruitless. However, these events point to the fact that the Church has always continued to have the desire and has taken all efforts to unite with the divided churches and has considered it as her mission.

The Council of Trent (1545-63) was convened in the background of Reformation and amidst the spread of Protestantism, especially in Europe, after Martin Luther's

ninety five theses as a strong reaction against the medieval doctrines and practices on salvation, justification and ecclesiology. The Council of Trent rejected the doctrine of Reformation. The First Vatican Council (1869-70) is famous for its definition on papal infallibility.²⁰

The Second Vatican Council

The Second Vatican Council has been an epoch-making one for its initiative to open the Roman Catholic Church to the modern world. The decree on ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*) and the approval of the decree on the Oriental Churches (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*) have been considered as huge step forward with regard to initiating the unity of the different Churches, at least, Eastern Churches. *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* has asserted the important value of the institutions, liturgical rites, ecclesiastical traditions and the established standards of the Christian life of the Eastern Churches. The Eastern Catholic Churches are considered as part of the "Holy Catholic Church, which is the Mystical Body of Christ, is made up of the faithful who are organically united in the Holy Spirit by the same faith, the same sacraments and the same government and who, combining together into various groups which are held together by a hierarchy, form separate Churches or Rites."²¹ According to the decree, though different in rite and tradition there is a bond of union among the individual Churches and the Catholic Church.

¹⁹ "The Council of Florence," *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford University Press, 2005) 253.

²⁰ Ken Parry and David J. Melling, "Ecumenical Councils," 172.

²¹ *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, No. 2

"Between these there exists an admirable bond of union, such that the variety within the Church in no way harms its unity; rather it manifests it, for it is the mind of the Catholic Church that each individual Church or Rite should retain its traditions whole and entire and likewise that it should adapt its way of life to the different needs of time and place."²² This recognition given to the Eastern Catholic churches may in a sense propel the initiatives also from other Eastern churches to have dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church.²³

Along with the instruction of retaining their own rite the decree advises that when baptized members of other churches come into "the fullness of the Catholic communion" they should also preserve their rite. This directive is in view of preventing the seepage of Eastern Catholics and of Orthodox converts into the Latin rite. In this decree the Eastern Catholics are given directions to adhere to their traditions while keeping the Catholic faith intact. This instruction could be viewed as against the Latinization.²⁴

Orientalium Ecclesiarum, in its paragraphs from 24-29, explicates the conciliatory norms for communion with other Eastern Christians. After indicating the risks of *communicatio in sacris*, sanction is given for 'Eastern Christians who are estranged in good faith from the Catholic

Church' to be permitted to the sacraments of Penance, the Eucharist and the Anointing of the Sick. For the Eastern Catholic faithful also the permission given to seek sacramental helps from ministers whose church possesses valid sacraments. It should be noted that these permissions are granted 'not based on any formal agreement.'²⁵ However, this should be considered as a landmark initiative to boost up better ecumenical relations.

The Decree on Ecumenism and Ecumenical Movement

As distinct from the aforementioned early ecumenical councils, the Ecumenical Movement is a modern, twentieth century, phenomenon. This movement has its origin in 1910, which intended to provide unity between the many different Christian churches through collaboration, 'mutual understanding and respect through dialogues and common witness to the Gospel in the midst of the search for unity.'²⁶ World Missionary Conference of Edinburgh in 1910 is considered as the beginning of modern Ecumenical Movement. It is the meeting of the Missionary Societies in 1888 and 1900 that decisively paved the way for the Edinburgh Conference. Those who have gathered in Edinburgh knew from firsthand experience that the scandalous divisions among the

²² *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, No. 2

²³ In this decree the Eastern Catholics are given directions to go back to their traditions while keeping the Catholic faith intact. This instruction could be viewed as against the Latinization. This could also be viewed as an ecumenism from within the Catholic Church.

²⁴ David J. Melling, "*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*," 357-358.

²⁵ David J. Melling, "*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*," 358.

²⁶ Donald K. MacKinnon, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, 86-87.

Christians are critical obstruction to the mission of the Church. The ecumenical endeavours have tried to reinstate the credibility of the Church's mission of reconciliation and healing that was contradicted by Christian disunity. The terms and usages such as Ecumenism, ecumenical and ecumenical relations and Ecumenical movement have got widespread recognition during the period between 1910 and 1930. The International Missionary Council has been established in 1921. The Faith and Order Movement which had its first meeting in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1927 has been instrumental in promoting the activities of ecumenical movement by setting up agendas for unity among Christians. The Protestants, Anglicans and Orthodox have been very active in the Faith Order Movement. In the beginning, the Roman Catholic Church was not present in this project even though the Pope has expressed his personal affability and blessing towards this attempt for unity. However, after Vatican II, Roman Catholic Church has entered as a member and this entry had one of the most important and growing effects on the Faith and Order Movement. It has led to the propagation of bilateral dialogues on faith and order issues. In 1948 the World Council of Churches has been formed with the intention of "visible unity in one faith and one Eucharistic fellowship, to promote their common witness in work for mission and evangelism, to engage in Christian service by serving human need, breaking down barriers between people, seeking justice and

peace, and upholding the integrity of creation, and to foster renewal in unity, worship, mission and service."²⁷ These movements for the sake of Christian unity have given clarity to the idea of ecumenism in the modern sense. Consequently, ecumenism could be viewed as the desire for unity among the churches and believers in Jesus Christ. It is an attempt to unite all Christians who are separated whereas ecumenical councils were union of churches against false doctrines and heresies.²⁸ Accordingly, there should be relationships among various churches in which there is mutual cooperation, recognition of each other's ministries, and common participation in various activities. The abovementioned ecumenical movement has considerable impact on the Decree on Ecumenism by Vatican II. Because of certain doubts regarding the ecumenical movement the Catholic Church has a distanced approach to it for a long time. However, the goal and aspects of the ecumenical movement have been well received by the Second Vatican Council. This acceptance has 'roots reaching back to the Catholic theology of the 19th century.' Walter Kasper considers Johann Adam Möhler and John Henry Newman as forerunners and pioneers in this regard. Kasper also have indicated that there were preparations by the Holy See before the Council in its call for unity by encouraging 'the Prayer for Unity and the Week of Prayer for Unity.' Popes Leo XIII and Benedict XV have initiated the welcoming attitude towards ecumenism while Pope Pius XI has gone a step

²⁷ <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/about-us>, the website of World Council of Churches (accessed on 18-11-2013).

²⁸ Donald K. MacKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, 86-87.

ahead by approving of the Malines Conversations with the Anglicans (1921-1926). In 1950 Pope Pius XII considering it as an influence of the Holy Spirit has welcomed the ecumenical movement. Pope Pius XII also has come up with a series of encyclicals as a preparation for the Council. Kasper, thus, identifies a fundamental continuity in the tradition of the Church with regard to ecumenical aspect and therefore it is 'erroneous to see the Council as a radical breach with tradition and an advent of a new church.'²⁹ This statement is fundamental to the argument that the Church has always been yearning for union with the divided Christians, which is evident from the historical events happened throughout the history of the Church.

It was on 21 November 1964 that the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council has issued the decree on Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*). The decree starts with these words: "The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council. Christ the Lord founded one Church and one Church only. However, many Christian communions present themselves to men as the true inheritors of Jesus Christ; all indeed profess to be followers of the Lord but differ in mind and go their different ways, as if Christ Himself were divided. Such division openly contradicts the will of Christ, scandalizes the world, and damages the holy

cause of preaching the Gospel to every creature."³⁰ According to the document the movement towards unity of Christians is what is ecumenical. The Council speaks about what is ecumenical movement by explicating different aspects of it. "The term 'ecumenical movement' indicates the initiatives and activities planned and undertaken, according to the various needs of the Church and as opportunities offer, to promote Christian unity. These are: first, every effort to avoid expressions, judgments and actions which do not represent the condition of our separated brethren with truth and fairness and so make mutual relations with them more difficult; then, 'dialogue' between competent experts from different Churches and Communities."³¹ These are guidelines for a proper dialogue in the context of ecumenical discussions in which every communion has to refrain from finding fault with others. It is opportunity to know themselves and others which will eventually lead to unity.

It has already been mentioned that the ecumenical dialogues flourished after the ecumenical Council of Second Vatican among Christian churches. The Roman Catholics have begun dialogue with the Methodists, the Orthodox, the Anglicans, the Disciples of Christ, the Lutherans, and the Reformed. The Anglicans have made dialogues with the Roman Catholics, the Orthodox, the

²⁹ Intervention by Card. Walter Kasper, "Lasting Significance and Urgency of *Unitatis Redintegratio*," Conference on the 40th Anniversary of the Promulgation of the Conciliar Decree "*Unitatis Redintegratio*," (Rocca di Papa, Mondo Migliore, 11, 12 and 13 November 2004) No. 1.

³⁰ *Unitatis Redintegratio*, No. 1.

³¹ *Unitatis Redintegratio*, No. 4.

Reformed, and the Oriental Orthodox. Each and every church in the 70s and 80s has been talking to every other church in a multifaceted network of theological dialogue.

The Council makes the declaration that the "entire heritage of spirituality and liturgy, of discipline and theology, in the various traditions, belongs to the full apostolic and catholic character of the church."³² It should be read in line with the instruction of Pope John Paul II in *Redemptor Hominis*: "all Christians must find what already unites them, even before their full communion is achieved."³³ All Christians have a common tradition because in the beginning it was all one, though existed in different communities as clearly mentioned by the Acts of the Apostles.³⁴

Different Models of Unity

It is not surprising to understand that just as the Churches are different so are their ideas regarding unity. Roman Catholic Church has given importance to three elements that are mutually interrelated, in matters of unity of the Church: "unity of belief, unity in worship (sacraments), and community in the

life of the Church under the leadership of legitimate pastors."³⁵ *Unitatis Redintegratio* gives importance to these aspects when it proclaims that Christ "called his community toward unity: in the confession of one faith, in a common celebration of worship, and in the fraternal harmony of God's family" under the leadership of the bishops together with the successor of Peter as head.³⁶ It should be noted that the fundamental difficulty to have communion between East and West is Petrine Office,³⁷ which is one of the three essential elements for the unity of the Church as per the Catholic norm.

These essential elements of unity of the Church are also highlighted by the Orthodox Churches. The unity "is strengthened through the grace of the Holy Spirit and by the mutual living love of members united and bound together with one body of Christ that is of individual Christians. However, this interior unity of the Church comes also to expression exteriorly, namely as a unity in faith, in administration, and in worship."³⁸ The Orthodox Churches depend on the principle

³² *Unitatis Redintegratio*, No.17.

³³ *Redemptor Hominis*, No. 12.

³⁴ During this period the predominant communities were Jerusalem and Antioch. After Peter's departure James was the head of the Jerusalem community. Barnabas and Paul were at the community of Antioch. Cf. Miguel M Garijo-Guembe, *Communion of the Saints: Foundations, Nature and Structure of the Church* (Collegeville, Minnesota, The Liturgical Press, 1994) 43-46.

³⁵ M Garijo-Guembe, *Communion of the Saints: Foundations, Nature and Structure of the Church*, 105.

³⁶ *Unitatis Redintegratio*, Nos. 2 and 4.

³⁷ "Among all the Churches and Ecclesial Communities, the Catholic Church is conscious that she has preserved the ministry of the Successor of the Apostle Peter, the Bishop of Rome, whom God established as her 'perpetual and visible principle and foundation of unity' and whom the Spirit sustains in order that he may enable all the others to share in this essential good." *Ut Unum Sint*, No. 88.

³⁸ Garijo-Guembe, *Communion of the Saints: Foundations, Nature and Structure of the Church*, 105; J. N. Karimiris, "Summary of the Dogmatic Teaching of the Orthodox Catholic Church," P. Bratsiotis, ed., *Die Orthodoxe Kirche in Griechischer Sicht*, Teil 1. (Stuttgart, 1959) 94.

of *communio* ecclesiology. It is about the community of Churches that stresses the collegiality of bishops. "The Catholic Church presents itself on the basis of its claims to the primacy." This is the difference between these two models of unity of the Church. There are other Churches that follow the Orthodox point of view such as Anglican Communion and Old Catholic Church.³⁹

The Churches that are offshoots of the Reformation find the locus of unity in the community of the local Church. The article 7 of Augsburg Confession states that the Church "is the assembly of believers, by whom the gospel is proclaimed in its purity and the holy sacraments administered according to the Gospels. For this is enough to preserve the unity of the Christian Churches, that there according to a pure understanding of the gospel is proclaimed harmoniously and the sacraments are administered according to God's Word."⁴⁰ These different models of unity of the Church perceived by different Churches always cause stumbling blocks in the ecumenical dialogues between them and thereby for the quest for unity.

The Cyprianic and Augustinian Influences on Sacramentology and Ecclesiology

There are also earlier theological issues that are still preventing the progress of dialogue in ecumenical relations. The teachings and position of Cyprian and a comparatively opposite view of Augustine are of importance to mention since they have great influence on the ecclesiology and sacramental theology of East and West. The followers of Novatian started the custom of rebaptizing the Christians willing to be part of their movement. With these developments there came into existence two traditions in the Church regarding this point: Africa and Asia Minor followed the custom of rebaptizing and on the other hand Rome and Egypt have decided the laying on of hands as sufficient for their entrance. It is on this point there started the spirited controversy between Rome and Africa during the mid-third century. The *Letters* 69 to 74 of Cyprian are dealing with this matter.⁴¹ It is in the wake of the problem of receiving the heretics back to the Church that Cyprian and Firmilian, adhering to the primeval practice of Asia Minor, were adamant on the invalidity of sacraments performed by heretics.⁴²

³⁹ Garijo-Guembe, *Communion of the Saints: Foundations, Nature and Structure of the Church*, 105-106.

⁴⁰ As quoted in Garijo-Guembe, *Communion of the Saints: Foundations, Nature and Structure of the Church*, 106.

⁴¹ Paul De Clerck, "Baptism," in Jean-Yves Lacoste (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Christian Theology* (New York, London: Routledge, 2005) 149-156, 151.

⁴² George A. Maloney, "The Principle of Economy: A Corrective of Christian Mercy," *Diakonia* 26 (1993) 119-133, 122. This position mainly has been later taken by the Orthodox Church. Cf. Tamara Grdzelidze, "Using the Principle of Oikonomia in Ecumenical Discussions: Reflections on 'the Limits of the Church' by George Florovsky," *The Ecumenical Review* 56 (2004) 234-246, 237.

Consequently, the notion of the validity and efficiency of the schismatic and heretic sacraments is unanimously discarded by the Cyprianic view: *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus* (Outside the Church, there is no salvation).⁴⁵ The position of Rome that has been held by Pope Stephen is condensed in this statement: "let there be no innovation, but let us merely follow the tradition by a laying on of hands as a sign of penance."⁴⁶ Cyprian has held his view as important because of the belief that "since the Holy Spirit only bestows its divine energy in the context of the holy Church, the ministers of heretical or schismatic groups, cut off from the Church even if they had been ordained in a bishopric founded in the apostolic succession, these ministers would be stripped of the grace and power to transfer spiritual charisms through the sacraments."⁴⁷ By convening an African Council in 220 Cyprian declined to be in relation with the Roman position. For Cyprian, "without exception, all heretics and schismatics are divested of all power and all authority."⁴⁸ Cyprian's argument is further grounded by stating that there is only one baptism that which is bestowed by the

central Church, because there is only "one Church and only one Holy Spirit, and no one could have God as a Father if he did not have the Church as a mother."⁴⁹ This is in contrast to the position of Pope Stephen of Rome and later that of Augustine on whose teaching regarding sacraments and ecclesiology the Catholic theological position has its strong foundation and dependence. The position of Cyprian has not been taken into the main stream and in the Council of Arles in 314 the Roman idea has been taken and given the affirmation that the value of baptism is dependent on the content of the faith that is professed (canon 8).⁵⁰ This has been approved later in the Council of Nicaea in 325 (canons 8 and 19).⁵¹

During the time of Augustine too there was the continuation of this controversy in the form of Donatism. Augustine has solved the conflict by taking a stand according to which he has distanced himself from Cyprian's ecclesiastical concept of baptism and adhering to a new Christological concept. Therefore, one could trace the root of the difference between the Eastern and Western sacramental

⁴⁵ Cyprian of Carthage, Ep. 73, 21, 2. This statement in fact summarizes the baptismal controversy between Rome and Carthage during the middle of the third century. The synods of Cyprian and Basil's predecessor Firmilian of Caesarea have put the schismatics during their time in the same league of heretics and dealt with them likewise. The baptism of schismatics or were considered as invalid as that of heretics. Andre de Halleux, "Cikonomia" in the First Canon of Saint Basil," *The Patristic and Byzantine Review* 6 (1987) 55-64, 58.

⁴⁶ Donatist of Carthage, Ep. 74, 2, 2-3. The statements of Pope Stephen of Rome are from the letters of Cyprian: "nec innovetur uti mos traditum est, ut manus illis imponentur in poenitentiam." Cf. also Paul De Clerck, "Baptism," 151.

⁴⁷ Andre de Halleux, "Cikonomia in the First Canon of Saint Basil," 54.

⁴⁸ Donatist of Carthage, Ep. 59, 1. Also see Jean-Marie Salamito, "Donatist of Carthage," 404.

⁴⁹ Paul De Clerck, "Baptism," 151. This idea is from Donatist of Cyprian of Carthage, Ep. 74, 2, 2. *De veteris apostolicae unitate*; Jean-Marie Salamito, "Donatist of Carthage," 404.

⁵⁰ Paul De Clerck, "Baptism," 151.

theologies in Cyprian of Carthage and Augustine. Augustinian theology has been the theology of the Catholic Church regarding sacraments and of ecclesiology. According to the Christological argument of Augustine, primarily baptism does not belong to the Church, but to God and Christ. Whoever may the minister but it is Christ who baptizes. Therefore, Augustine states: "if Peter baptizes, he (Christ) baptizes; if Paul baptizes, he baptizes; if Judas baptizes, he baptizes."⁴⁹ Accordingly, as emerged from the context of "the non-repetition of baptism and of ordination" even of "schismatics and of certain heretics" there is "the concept of the fundamental validity of these two sacraments even when they have been administered outside the canonical communion of the Church."⁵⁰ This doctrine has been later elaborated by the Scholastics with the presence

of an indelible character imprinted upon the persons' soul who have been baptized, confirmed and ordained. This character or sign prevents the repetition of a valid baptism, confirmation and ordination.⁵¹ Augustine holds the position that within the sects and divisions of Christianity the "union of peace" has been damaged; however, in their mysteries the "unity of the Spirit" had not been terminated.

The Eastern Church on this matter has followed the decision and the rigorous idea of Cyprian. As against the position of Cyprian, Pope Stephen of Rome in the Western Church recognized the baptisms and ordinations performed by heretics or schismatics.⁵² Even though these names are in the forefront, however, many other fathers of the Church contributed with their important opinions. Cyprian's doctrine is one of the basic

⁴⁹ Augustine, *Commentary on John* VI. 5-8. Cf. also Paul De Clerck, "Baptism," 151.

⁵⁰ Andre de Halleux, "'Oikonomia' in the First Canon of Saint Basil," 53.

⁵¹ Andre de Halleux, "'Oikonomia' in the First Canon of Saint Basil," 54. Regarding sacraments Augustine makes a distinction between character and grace. Therefore, those who are outside of the church also perform the sacraments validly because the validity of the sacraments is depending on Christ who ordered them and not on the minister or recipient. Such sacraments will recover saving power once they enter into the Church. Dyovouniotes correctly evaluates the Western position regarding sacramentology and ecclesiology developed from Augustine: "The Western Church which distinguishes form or character from grace in those sacraments which may not be repeated, and which accepts that the form is conveyed through the canonical performance of the sacrament, considers that sacraments canonically performed by schismatics and heretics convey character but not grace, which does not exist in heretical churches, and that consequently such sacraments lacking as they do Divine grace do not cause salvation which a man can only receive in the true church. Accordingly the Western Church recognizes the validity of the sacraments of heretics if they are correctly performed, and emphasizes the necessity for the return of heretics to the bosom of the church for the acquisition of grace and salvation by grace, which he lacks who remains in heresy." C. Dyovouniotes, "The principle of Economy," 95.

⁵² C. Dyovouniotes, "The principle of Economy," 95. It is the first time that the Christian Church was divided by anything other than specific dogmatic issues. The disagreement on the mode of penitential discipline that should be given to heretics and schismatics who are willing to come back to the Church in a way provide the source of this division. Cf. John Klentos, "Rebaptizing Converts into the Orthodox Church: Old Perspectives on a New Problem," *Studia Liturgica* 29 (1999) 216-234, 218.

foundations of Orthodox ecclesiology and seems in open opposition to the presuppositions of the ecumenical movement. However, there are reservations regarding the reception of Cyprianic view even in the Orthodox milieu.⁵³

The Cyprianic view proposes that the ecclesiastical *oikonomia* can influence only the use of a particular charisma of the Church, and it cannot be applied to something that does not exist. That means, "*oikonomia* cannot declare existent what is non-existent," according to the Cyprianic view of sacraments and ecclesiology.⁵⁴ This insight of Cyprian has been accepted into the apostolic canons of the Orthodox Church during the canons of the baptismal council in 257, which was held by Cyprian himself. These canons unequivocally abandoned the idea of baptism outside of the church. Thus, the Cyprianic idea of heretical baptism was considered as a norm later in the Orthodox Church.⁵⁵

However, there are particular instances of preventing the repetition of the baptism or ordination of some heretics. This has been done because of the strategy of exercising the economy to show leniency in which there is the alteration in the canonical strictness in view of the welfare of the Church and the salvation of the souls.⁵⁶

Conclusion

When confronted with problems of different kind there is always a call for going back to the sources. This is highly applicable to the ecumenical endeavours. Unity could be reached only by having a return to the elements. The faith of the early centuries, of the undivided Church, should be retrieved. This elucidation has pointed out, while examining the history of the ecumenical councils, that it is because of certain theological terminologies and themes that there have been divisions. Therefore, there should be renewed endeavours in modern theological sphere for

⁵³ Hilarion, *There is no Christianity without the Church* (Sao Paolo: 1954) 101. George Florovsky writes: "As a mystical organism, as the sacramental Body of Christ, the Church cannot be adequately described in canonical terms or categories alone. It is impossible to state or discern the true limits of the Church simply by canonical signs or marks.... In her sacramental, mysterious existence the Church surpasses canonical measurements. For that reason a canonical cleavage does not immediately signify mystical impoverishment and desolation. All that Saint Cyprian said about the unity of the Church and the sacraments can be and must be accepted. But it is not necessary, as he did, to draw the final boundary around the body of the Church by canonical points alone." George Florovsky, *Ecumenism I*, 37.

⁵⁴ Tamara Grdzeldze, "Using the Principle of *Oikonomia* in Ecumenical Discussions: Reflections on "the Limits of the Church" by George Florovsky," 237.

⁵⁵ Jerome Kotsonis aptly points out that "the First Canon of the Council convened in Carthage during the time St. Cyprian, which was later confirmed by the Sixth Ecumenical Council, has an ecumenical validity and therefore constitutes the canonical "exactness" in this matter." Cf. Jerome Kotsonis, "The Validity of the Anglican Orders According to the Canon Law of the Orthodox Church," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 3 (1957) 182-196, 192. John H. Erickson holds that there is no significance for Cyprian in Byzantium because "St. Basil had already regarded Cyprian's baptismal practice as obsolete." John H. Erickson, *The Challenge of Our Past*, 120.

⁵⁶ Andre de Halleux, "'Oikonomia' in the First Canon of Saint Basil," 54.

understanding God more functionally (*oikonomia*) than ontologically (*theologia*). The insistence on the economic aspect than the *theologia* aspect is not a new one, since it has been the theology of the Scripture. The Cappadocian Fathers in their search for specific evidence about this incomprehensible reality (*theologia*) found consolation in investigating the divine nature by its actions (*energeiai*); these "actions" constituted the divine economy (*oikonomia*).⁵⁷

There is also growing awareness regarding the theological notions that are predominant in other Churches, necessitated by the needs of the time, and accordingly numerous attempts have been made by experts and theologians for mutual recognition of theological concepts. The task of assimilating these notions should be taken up in view of overcoming hazards in ecumenical theology and solving pastoral problems that are enormous in the current and different ecclesial situation. At present it is customary between the Eastern and the Western Churches to look upon each other for ideological solutions when daunted by theological and pastoral problems. The discontentment with the scholastic metaphysics and with the stringent legalism of the canon laws of the

Church, especially in confrontation with the pastoral and sacramental problems, has really hastened such an interest. More importantly, the ecumenical dimension of ecclesiology and the ongoing dialogue among the Churches within the context of ecumenical movement have, to an extent, paved the way for these developments. Yet another factor that instigates the increasing understanding regarding the theological significance of the typical Eastern or Western concepts is the membership and existence of the Eastern Catholic Churches as part of the Western Catholic Church, which are also sharing a common tradition with the other Eastern Churches.

Along with the different models of unity and the difference in ecclesiology and thereby in sacramental theology there are also other themes that may eventually cause impasse such as *filioque* in the ecumenical dialogues for unity among Christians. Therefore, it should be customary in ecumenical dialogues to start with the common aspects of faith and life of the Churches. These common aspects could be found in the life of the Church of the first centuries when it was a single *oikoumene*. The quest for the lost unity should start from there.

□

⁵⁷ Jaroslav Pelikan, *Christianity and Classical Cultures: The Metamorphosis of Natural Theology in the Christian Encounter with Hellenism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993) 207-208.

News

Canonization of Bl. John Paul II and Bl. John XXIII

The date for the canonization of Bl. John Paul II and Bl. John XXIII is announced. It will be on 27 April 2014, the Sunday after Easter, which is also celebrated as the mercy Sunday in the universal Church. Pope Francis has fixed this date in the consistory of Cardinals. He had already signed the document on 05 July 2013, confirming the decision to raise these two earlier Popes to the status of saints.

The Second Anaphora and the New Lectionary Published for the Liturgical Use in the Syro Malabar Church

The restored anaphora of Theodore and the new lectionary for the readings in the liturgical celebrations of the Syro-Malabar Church are officially published. The anaphora of Theodore is published with effect from 15 August 2013 and the lectionary was published with effect from 01 December 2013. The anaphora of Theodore is restored after a long break of 415 years. Through the publication of the lectionary, a wish of the Syro Malabar Church from 1986 has been realized.

Archbishop George Kochery as the New Apostolic Nuncio of Bangladesh

The Apostolic See has appointed Archbishop George Kochery as the new apostolic nuncio of Bangladesh. Arch Bishop Kochery, aged 68, is from the Archeparchy of Changanacherry of the Syro Malabar Church. Before this new appointment, he was the apostolic nuncio in Ghana and Zimbabwe.

***Evangelii Gaudium* the New Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis**

Pope Francis has released a new apostolic exhortation, titled *Evangelii Gaudium*. It is his first apostolic exhortation and is devoted mainly to the theme of the ever comforting joy of new evangelization with its missionary, pastoral, kerygmatic and social dimensions. The document was published on 24 November 2013, at the conclusion of the celebration of the year of faith. It has 288 paragraphs, distributed in 5 chapters. It also discusses several major contemporary issues in the Church and the society like reform of the administrative structures in the Church, dignity of human person, globalization, abortion, theology of womanhood, option for the poor, etc..

Holy Father Announces an Extra Ordinary Synod on Family

On October 8, 2013 the Vatican announced that Pope Francis would convene an extraordinary synod of bishops from 05 to 19 October, 2014. This synod will discuss on the theme of 'the pastoral challenges of the family in the context of new evangelization'. Extra ordinary synod is a meeting together of the pope with the heads of the different Churches in the Catholic communion, of the heads of the different departments of the Roman curia and of the presidents of the bishops' conferences. Such extraordinary assembly of the Synod of Bishops was convened in the past only twice in 1969 and 1985.

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